

RRB Strategic Plan

The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 mandated that Federal agencies submit, to the Congress and the President's Office of Management and Budget, strategic plans outlining their mission and their general goals and objectives for the next five years, as well as defining how they will meet those goals and objectives. The Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) submitted its "Strategic Plan" for the years 1997-2002 to the Congress and the White House in September 1997.

The following questions and answers provide information on the RRB's Strategic Plan under the Government Performance and Results Act.

1. What are the purposes of the Government Performance and Results Act?

In summary, the purposes of this Act are to improve the confidence of the American people in the Federal Government by holding agencies accountable for achieving program results; improve Federal program effectiveness and public accountability by focusing on results, service quality and customer satisfaction; enable Congress to more accurately evaluate an agency's performance by providing more objective information on the objectives and costs of Federal programs; and improve the internal management of the Federal Government.

To achieve these purposes, the Act requires that agencies set program goals and prepare plans for meeting those goals. The Act provides a framework whereby an agency's performance will be measured against the goals it has set and also requires each agency to publicly report on the progress it has made.

2. What are the goals and objectives of the RRB's Strategic Plan?

The RRB has four strategic goals; and for each goal several strategic objectives have been established to enable the agency to focus on achieving that goal.

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The first strategic goal is to provide excellent customer service.

Planning to satisfy customers' expectations for quality service, both in terms of service delivery options and levels and manner of performance, the RRB has established the following five strategic objectives that focus on the specifics of achieving this goal:

- optimize accuracy in providing benefits.
- make payments timely.
- provide relevant, timely and accurate information which is easy to understand.
- provide a range of choices in service delivery methods.
- ensure an efficient and effective reporting system for railroad employers.

The second strategic goal is to safeguard the RRB's trust funds through prudent stewardship.

Committed to fulfilling its fiduciary responsibilities to the rail community, the RRB has established the following three objectives that direct its focus on this goal:

- ensure the integrity of benefit programs through comprehensive and integrated monitoring and prevention programs.
- ensure efficient operations through effective management control and quality assurance programs.
- ensure that trust fund assets are projected, collected, recorded, and invested appropriately through an effective and efficient trust fund management program.

The third strategic goal is to align resources to effectively and efficiently meet the RRB's mission.

In an environment of limited resources, these resources must be aligned with the needs of RRB customers so as to be certain of delivering service when, where, and how RRB customers need it. The RRB also must ensure that its employees have the tools, training and skills they need to perform a range of duties, and the flexibility to respond effectively to change, as needed.

The following five strategic objectives will enable the RRB to meet this challenging goal:

- align resources using a performance approach based on contribution to mission.

- strive to deliver service at the point-of-contact (“one and done”). Through reductions in both the amount of work passed from one employee to another and in the layers of review involved in a transaction, customers should be able to complete most business with the RRB in a single contact.
- use outside sources and partnerships, when appropriate, to accomplish the agency’s mission.
- ensure that all employees can link their daily activities with the agency’s mission in an environment that is discrimination-free and characterized by cooperation, empowerment, and mutual commitment to its stakeholders.
- ensure that the RRB consistently pays the lowest price for products and services commensurate with quality, service delivery, and reliability.

The fourth strategic goal is to expand the use of technology and automation to achieve the RRB’s mission.

The RRB established the following three strategic objectives focusing on information technology and automation as a key strategy for helping it to achieve its mission:

- ensure that the technology infrastructure supports achievement of the agency’s Strategic Plan.
- ensure effective and efficient management of Information Technology resources.
- continue service by ensuring that the RRB’s systems are Year 2000-compliant.

3. How did the RRB develop its Strategic Plan?

This plan is the culmination of a cooperative and intensive effort on the part of the RRB’s management and staff in consultation with the Congress and the Office of Management and Budget, and reflects input from its stakeholders.

The RRB’s primary stakeholders are, of course, the employees and employers of the rail industry. Because it is a Federal agency, stakeholders also include the White House, and Congress. Other Federal agencies also have a stake in the RRB’s success, in particular the Social Security Administration with whom the RRB closely coordinates many programs. Last, but not least, are the RRB’s own employees and their representatives, whose talent and dedication are crucial to the success of this strategic plan.

4. What steps will the RRB take to ensure achievement of the Strategic Plan’s goals?

In order to ensure achievement of strategic goals, the Government Performance and Results Act provides that each agency will also develop annual performance plans, which are

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submitted along with the agency's budget request. The annual performance plan lays out specific goals and objectives, along with performance indicators and specific measurable targets.

The RRB has developed an annual performance plan based on its strategic goals and designed to make continual, measurable progress on its objectives. The first annual performance plan was released to the Office of Management and Budget and the Congress along with the agency's fiscal year 1999 budget submission in September 1997. The RRB will submit its first annual performance report, as required by the Government Performance and Results Act, in March 2000, six months after the close of fiscal year 1999. This report will compare actual performance to goals. If goals are not being met, the report will include an explanation and a schedule for meeting the goals.

In addition to developing a performance plan every year for inclusion with the budget, the RRB will monitor its strategic plan annually, and update it as needed. At a minimum, the strategic plan will be updated every three years as required to project five years into the future.

The RRB is proud of its strategic plan and expects that the plan will guide the agency as it continues its long and distinguished tradition of excellence in service to its customers. The RRB has a proven track record of carrying out its plans and achieving results. The RRB believes that this strategic plan, along with the annual performance plans and sufficient budget resources, will help the agency to achieve the results its customers need and deserve.

Copies of the plan, or summaries, will be made available to those who provided feedback, as well as to employer and employee representatives. The complete plan is available on the RRB's Web Site at <http://www.rrb.gov>.

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